Is an Open Internet Important to You?

The Internet gets credit for a wide range of social, economic and cultural advancements despite the huge differences that exist between Internet accessibility in countries around the world.

Almost 20 percent of Africans have Internet access through broadband connections on mobile phones, according to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

For Internet expansion to continue in Africa, experts say users themselves must help ensure access remains free and open.

Watch LaJeunesse's clip on YouTube ☒

"It's only the free and open Internet that allows for the creativity, the innovation and the entrepreneurship," says Google's Ross LaJeunesse, "that, in turn, allows for economic development, social advancement and connection."

LaJeunesse is the head of Global Free Expression and International Relations for Google, one of the Internet's most prominent corporate entities. He meets with government leaders around the world promoting policies that will allow people with good ideas to use the Internet to pursue, develop and promote them.

Some governments don't want open policies because they prefer to control information media providing information to their publics. But the Internet allows citizens to convene their on public policy discussions online without government interventions.

Click here to watch this clip on YouTube ☒

An independent study shows that countries where that online discussion takes place freely– such as South Africa and Kenya — are experiencing stronger growth in the IT sector. "We're seeing evidence that there is a correlation here," LaJeunesse said when speaking to Mandela Washington Fellows during a July appearance.

Web users who have developed relationships and opportunities have done so in online spaces that are frequently free to use qwith no charge, said Suzanne Philion, a public relations specialist representing Yahoo on the Washington panel. That gives users a personal stake in ensuring their networks remain free of government control on into the future.

> "We think about [activism for a free Internet] as civic engagement," Phillion said, "and issues that you should really be invested in for your professional, personal lives going forward."

A free and open Internet is a priority issue for the Obama administration, with the president warning policymakers everywhere that action to restrict Internet access, availability or content will ultimately be "self-defeating."

> Internet constraints are "going to inhibit the growth of the country generally, because closed

societies that are not open to new ideas, eventually they fall behind," *Obama said*. "They miss out on the future because they're so locked into trying to maintain the past."

U.S. Under Secretary Catherine Novelli is boosting the Obama administration's efforts to maintain a free and open Internet. In a recent speech at the Internet Governance Forum, she emphasized how the Internet allows people with talent and good ideas to make their own opportunities.

"For example, three Nigerian university students have already helped tens of thousands of Africans secure jobs by creating a job search website called 'Jobberman.com,'" Novelli said. "As West Africa's most popular online career resource, Jobberman connects talented individuals with job opportunities."

Help keep the Internet open so that you can pursue your ideas. Express your support for a free and open Internet and learn more about the issues here: openinternet.state.gov

Learn more:
"The Power of a Free and Open Internet and How Citizens Can Be Involved"

A Free and Open Internet

Internet Governance

BongoHive, Mozilla Expand Africa's Internet Base

The information technology industry has been a huge growth engine for the U.S. economy since the 1990s. Its growth rate over the last 20 years has exceeded the national average, and created more than 1.5 million jobs.

Whether Africa's expanding IT sector will be able to stimulate similar growth will depend greatly on Africans themselves, according to one industry insider.

"What value are you bringing to the table, that is the question you should always be asking yourself," said Lukonga Lindunda, a Mandela Washington Fellow who is an information technology entrepreneur in Lusaka, Zambia.

"What value do you have that you feel Google can invest [in], not just give you free money," is another question that Lindunda posed to his audience of young Africans as a member of a Washington panel discussion about Internet access and availability.

If Africans want to leap into the online global marketplace of goods, commerce and ideas, Lindunda said African Internet users must demonstrate that they are desirable customers who provide business expansion opportunities for huge IT companies.

Lindunda is part of the team that started the IT innovation hub [BongoHive](). He and his partners started with just about nothing in 2011. Now they've helped link like-minded people across the continent, using social networks to connect about 100 hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship.

[BongoHive]()pioneers are "out-of-the-box thinkers" who want to apply their own innovation and creativity to achieve sustainable progress in business, education, health and other fields.

Watch Lukongo's Full Comments Here:

[Mozilla-Uganda]()is another nonprofit organization working to expand Internet accessibility and literacy in Africa. Mozilla is a global nonprofit organization that views the Web as a public resource to be shared. They brought together volunteers in Uganda who are bringing greater Web access to Ugandan users.

"These volunteers have localized the Firefox browser to local languages and brought that technology to the community around them," said Leah Gilliam, who represented Mozilla on the panel.

Mozilla is all about "making is learning." They created the [Webmaker tool]() to help people learn about Web development to pass it on and teach those skills to an ever-broader network of people. Listen to what Mozilla says about the Maker Party:

Listen or watch clips from the rest of this panel here to learn more, and share your thoughts about Internet innovation and expansion in Africa at #YALICHAT:

[Yahoo's Policy of "Technology First"]()

[IBM's Work with African Nations]()

Qualities to Look for in a Co-Founder

What is the Number 1 quality you should you look for in a startup co-founder and why?

Passion for the Venture: Kelly Azevedo of [She's Got Systems](), a business consultancy

"Passion is not something that can be manufactured. It takes a lot of dedication to push past the mistakes and pivots necessary in a new company. Without passion for the business, it is easy to lose sight of your goals. … If you feel that your partner has lost interest and is already looking for another business or challenge, then it can sink the company even faster."

Complementary Skill Sets: Tim Jahn of [matchist](#), which connects companies to computer program developers

"Look for somebody who likes to do what you don't and is really good at what you're not. You want a co-founder who brings everything you're missing to the table, so as a team you're the complete package. ... You want to make sure all the important skill sets are there between the two of you."

Comfort with Conflict: Mitch Gordon of [Go Overseas](#), which organizes international study, teaching and internship programs

"Startups require a flexible, creative, open-minded team. A company that succeeds without pivoting multiple times is the exception that proves the rule. When looking for a co-founder, pay very close attention to how he [or she] handles conflict. Disagreements are necessary. You have to create an environment where experimentation is encouraged and failure isn't necessarily looked down upon. Conflict is an opportunity."

Vision: Jeff Slobotski of [Silicon Prairie News,](#) an online publication that reports on companies in the middle of America

"If the co-founder has the ability to see well into the future while executing against the day-to-day objectives, the business has a strong chance of not only succeeding, but [of] scaling exponentially."

Friendship: Wade Foster of [Zapier](#), an online service that helps people move data among computer applications

"You wouldn't be friends with someone who doesn't share similar interests. Friends are the family you choose. The best part about being friends is that you'll stick through the rough patches. When business gets rough, and it will, your startup isn't the only thing holding your business together — you have a friendship to fall back on. There are lots of other important qualities, but friendship is Number 1."

Credibility: Robby Hill of [HillSouth](#), an information technology consultancy

"A co-founder has to believe in the vision enough to be able to sacrifice everything for the sake of achieving success. Your co-founder must realize this job is more than a paycheck — in both the risk and the rewards that are available. Make sure this quality is tested before bringing him or her onto the team."

Trusthworthiness: Kelsey Meyer of [Influence & Co.](#), a public relations firm

"The Number 1 quality you should look for in a co-founder is someone you can trust. Even if a co-founder messes up now and then, if you have ultimate trust, you will always be able to fix it."

Is This Business Feasible?

Adapted from the Peace Corps manual Doing a Feasibility Study: Training Activities for Starting or Reviewing a Small Business

The first business idea someone has may not be the best one. So to find out if a business can work, do a feasibility study. It will help you answer the question: Are we able to produce a product or service that people want to buy and that we can sell for a profit?

To begin, gather and analyze information that will help you clarify:

• What product or service you want to sell.
• If people will buy the product or service.
• How your business will operate.
• Your estimated sales income.
• Your estimated business expenses.

Find information on the economy of the community in which you want to operate. This information might be in reports from government offices or a university. Or you might talk to people who have a lot of contact with community members, such as extension agents or health workers. Identify products or services that the community may need but does not have now.

Here is what one group did. Its members wanted to start a small grocery store. First, they found out if people would buy food and other items from their store. Then they found out how much it would cost to start the store and keep it operating. Next, they estimated how much they would sell and what their sales income and profits would be.

But in doing their feasibility study, they realized there were already three stores in the community and concluded that the grocery competition was so strong that their business might fail. They also realized that they needed more startup money than they had or could borrow. So the group rejected the grocery store idea.

Then they thought about other business possibilities. They settled on the idea of a furniture repair service. Since there was little local competition, they decided the business was feasible.

Another group of would-be entrepreneurs raised and marketed pigs. They used a feasibility study to review their operation and found that high feed costs were decreasing their profits. So they decided

to look into cheaper kinds of feed, as well as other ways to reduce their business expenses.

Doing a feasibility study will help you assess the viability of your business ideas or review your current business performance.

[Professional Development Through Internships](#)

About 100 young Africans have developed better professional skills after serving in professional internships at a variety of U.S. business, government, cultural and humanitarian organizations.

These young professionals say their experiences have provided new insights into organizational operations, communications and mission accomplishment. They say participating in an internship can be a learning experience at any age, and should not be considered a workplace experience for students alone.

A few young African professionals and the workplace mentors who have guided them through their internships made a recent appearance in a Washington panel discussion and shared their insights with an online audience.

"It's an exciting journey to put the pieces of the puzzle together so it can help my experience back home. For me, that's huge," said Irene Chikumbo, who interned at the U.S. African Development Foundation. She is from Zimbabwe where she is a cofounder and community manager at the [Hypercube Technology Hub](#). Irene is working to build information technology capabilities in Harare and encourage digital startups.

Irene interned at the [U.S. African Development Foundation](#), an organization with a large institutional culture and global operations. It's a very different workplace from Irene's Harare nonprofit organization.

"The internship has helped me understand some things that I would probably not have understood as an entrepreneur: understanding systems and processes and building relationships. [These are experiences] that I probably never would have had if I hadn't come on the internship."

Panel members – interns and mentors alike – described their relationship as one of give-and-take. Interns can learn a lot in a professional workplace, but they need to give a lot also.

"The most important thing is energy and interest," said Karen Carter, a [Smithsonian Institution](#) mentor, "and a commitment to lifelong learning."

Mohammed Umar is a civil servant in Nigeria who served a Washington internship at the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#). In this workplace, Mohammed said he developed better decision-

making skills and discovered how to evaluate resources, needs and operational conditions to arrive at better policies.

"By the time I'm going home," Mohammed said during a panel, "I would really love to apply that pattern that will help me to coordinate our major goals, our policies back home, and our major actions to enable us to become much more productive and change the way we do business to conform with modern international challenges in the 21st century."

Sheila Helton-Intram, Mohammed's mentor at the Department of Transportation, said he quickly learned one of the first lessons of internship. "When you come in as an intern, you have to jump in, [and] hit the ground rolling."

Working in a racially and culturally diverse workplace is an important experience Jean Pierre Maro will take home to Senegal from his internship at the Smithsonian Institution. He said he's come to recognize racial and cultural diversity as "richness" and assets that help a leader develop better policies and make better decisions.

"There' no way you are going to implement good policies that are going to have good impacts if you [do not] have diversity in mind as a starting point."

Jean Pierre Maro founded [Bridge Kids Senegal,](#) a nonprofit organization devoted to providing schooling for underprivileged children.

Besides their internships, these young African professionals also participated in the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and attended U.S. educational institutional for about five weeks during June and July. They then attended a Washington summit with 500 other YALI fellows, engaging with top national leaders including President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama.

Watch the whole panel discussion to learn more:

[Entrepreneurship in Transitioning Economies - Lessons from Professor Michael Goldberg](#)

Join Professor Goldberg for a Facebook #YALICHAT starting Tuesday, September 9th. You can submit your questions until Thursday, September 11th. Post your questions on [this Facebook post](#) or tweet your questions to [@YALINetwork](#) and include #YALICHAT. Tuesday – Thursday, September 9th – 11th.

Professor Goldberg spent his entire career structuring and implementing global business operations. Read his blog post below and be ready to get his insights and network with thousands of other young African leaders who will be participating in the chat.

By Michael Goldberg

South Africa held its first democratic elections in 1994. I was there, and what I learned has stayed with me throughout my business career.

Running a voter education workshop at
Groenberg Secondary School, Grabouw,
South Africa, 1994. Photo courtesy Michael
Goldberg.

In a warehouse in Cape Town, I was working with a team of black South Africans, puzzling out a distribution plan for voter education materials. My colleagues, raised in the apartheid period, hadn't had the educational opportunities I had as a fresh graduate from Princeton University. But they came up with the creative strategies we needed to distribute voter education materials to the people who needed them, something that had never been done in South Africa before.

Lacking reliable delivery services in the townships and remote rural areas, my South African colleagues knew how to tap into alternate distribution channels like mobile health units and informal taxis. Their entrepreneurial approach was a success, and their ingenuity was impressive.

Earlier this year, I worked with other entrepreneurial Africans in the virtual environment. I developed and taught a free massive open online course (MOOC) for Case Western Reserve University called *Beyond Silicon Valley: Growing Entrepreneurship in Transitioning Economies*. Silicon Valley is the region of California where the U.S. technology industry boomed, and this course went way, way beyond …. all the way to Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Zimbabwe. More than 23,000 students from 183 countries enrolled. Through a series of short, documentary-style videos, students learned how an entrepreneurial ecosystem has developed in my hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. A decade ago, things were dismal in Cleveland for any entrepreneur wanting to start a new business. We were losing manufacturing jobs by the thousands each year, as our old industries declined and no new ones replaced them.

In 2002, Cleveland was ranked last among 61 cities rated for entrepreneurs by *Entrepreneur Magazine*. In the course, we investigated the massive efforts by Cleveland's business, philanthropic, and government leaders to reverse the trend and make the city a better place for new businesses and accelerate the growth of start-up companies in the region.

My MOOC also highlighted entrepreneurial perspectives from transitioning economies outside the United States. For example, Jovani Ntabgoba, the general manager of kLab, a dynamic accelerator in Kigali, shared his perspectives in several of the videos about how entrepreneurs are supported in Rwanda. Students from around the world shared ideas in our lively discussion forums regarding to how to enable the growth of start-up companies.

I am offering the MOOC again this October, and I would love to see additional students participate from Africa. I particularly hope that members of the YALI Network interested in entrepreneurship will consider organizing local events to have discussions on topics that coincide with the course. These could be held at local universities, accelerators, or other hubs of entrepreneurship and would enable MOOC participants to reflect on how the lessons of the course might apply in their

community.

Learn more about how to organize a YALI Network face2face event [here](#).
Learn more about this course and how it may be of value to you on [Coursera's website](#)

The views and opinions expressed here belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the YALI Network or the U.S. government. The YALI Network recommends online courses (MOOCs) from a variety of providers on a range of subjects. Find more courses [here](#).

Pictured above: Professor Goldberg joins students at the American Corner in Tetovo, Macedonia, for a MOOC discussion. Photo courtesy [American Corner Tetovo](#).

Ebola: A Message from President Obama and Facts from CDC Health Experts

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa is something that matters to all of us, and President Obama is asking you, as leaders in your communities, to share the facts about Ebola and help stop the spread of this disease.

Watch his message and read more of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Facebook chat with the YALI Network.

In response to the concerns voiced by the YALI Network, experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, were invited to participate in a Facebook #YALICHAT to help verify the facts and dispel the rumors about Ebola. More than 100 questions and comments came in from across Africa. Here is a summary of the chat.

Joel N. expressed his concerns about the dangers of Ebola and asked how the United States is assisting African nations in battling the infection.

CDC: More than 60 CDC staff are deployed in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone to assist with the outbreak response efforts. CDC staff are helping with surveillance, contact tracing, database management, and health education. And back at our headquarters in the U.S., about 500 additional CDC staff are providing assistance. CDC and the U.S. government will continue to take active steps to respond to the rapidly changing situation in West Africa.

Alhadhuir N. in the island nation of Comoros asked the CDC experts, how can a person avoid this sickness?

CDC: To help protect yourself from Ebola, you should do the following: 1) Practice good hygiene. 2) Avoid contact with body fluids: blood, feces, saliva, urine, vomit, and semen 3) Avoid burial rituals

that require handling the body of a person who died from Ebola. 4) Avoid contact with nonhuman primates and bats, as well as body fluids and raw meat from these animals.

Ebola is also spread through direct contact with objects that have been contaminated with the virus. Ebola is not spread through the air or by water. In general, it is not spread through food.

Anyone who is sick with Ebola can spread the virus, and will present these symptoms: fever greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F; additional symptoms, such as severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or unexplained hemorrhage are also common.Jackson B. in the Democratic Republic of Congo asked what can be done to prevent the disease in areas where many people are already sick?

CDC: The most effective way to stop the current Ebola outbreak is to find Ebola patients, isolate and care for them, and trace their contacts. Also, people need to be educated about safe burial practices, and we must make sure that healthcare workers strictly follow infection control procedures in hospitals. This is how all previous Ebola outbreaks have been stopped.

CDC advises that people monitor their health for 21 days if they were in an area with an Ebola outbreak.

Claudio V. wrote from Mozambique: does it have cure?

CDC: Thank you for this important question, Claudio. There is no vaccine or medicine (e.g., antiviral drug) that has been proven effective against Ebola. But there are many candidates in development. Three companies that have Ebola treatments in development are Mapp Biopharmaceutical Inc. (ZMapp), Tekmira, and Biocryst Pharmaceuticals. In addition, a company called Newlink is working on a possible vaccine.

[Editor's Note: Two U.S. missionaries who contracted the virus in Africa were flown home for treatment and were apparently cured of the disease with ZMapp treatment.]

Takawira D. in Zimbabwe had a follow up question about ZMapp: How long are we going to wait before the experimental drug that healed the two Americans is made available to Africans?

CDC: ZMapp is still in an experimental stage, so the manufacturer reports that there is a very limited supply and that they don't yet have the capacity to manufacture large quantities of this treatment. So it cannot be purchased and is not available for general use.

The two American aid workers sick with Ebola received ZMapp because it was privately arranged by Samaritan's Purse, the private humanitarian organization that employed one of these two aid workers. The U.S. government did not procure, transport, approve, or administer the ZMapp treatment.

So far there is no vaccine or medicine that has been proven to be effective against Ebola. But there are many candidates in development. Three companies that have Ebola treatments in development are Mapp Biopharmaceutical Inc. (ZMapp), Tekmira, and Biocryst Pharmaceuticals. In addition, a company called Newlink is working on a possible vaccine.

[Editor's Note: By U.S. law, a pharmaceutical company must conduct a complex series of trials, field

tests and data analysis before a federal agency approves the drug for the marketplace. The manufacturer has not yet completed that process with ZMAPP.]

Additional Information:

U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Read the questions and answers from the Facebook chat here.

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Post by Young African Leaders Initiative Network.

Communities, Communication Can Improve African Health Care

Caption: Dr. Farouk Garba, a
Nigerian physician, spent his
2014 fellowship at Morgan State
University.
Credit: Photo: Farouk Garba

Disease outbreaks such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola and pandemic influenza have led health agencies everywhere to realize they have a shared mission. A dangerous disease-causing pathogen may emerge far away. But when one infected patient boards a plane, the disease becomes a much broader problem, even a global health threat, very quickly.

Nations have come to a mutual understanding of their responsibility to maintain "global health security." With an agreed set of international health regulations, they help each other control, contain and monitor disease. That's hard in developing-world countries with large rural populations where advanced health care services aren't available.

The current Ebola outbreak in West Africa underscores how urgent it is to improve not just health care services, but also public understanding of how disease is transmitted and what health care workers must do to effectively control disease.

Some participants in the Mandela Washington Fellowship Program for Young African Leaders have been thinking about these questions and have offered some thoughts for improvement of the continent's health care.

Dr. Pierre Balamou of Guinea, who works on malaria control with the West African Health Organization, urged YALI Network members to promote better public health "by educating our families and relatives on good public health practices and promoting health at home, [in the]

workplace and everywhere."

Dr. Laud Boateng of Ghana echoed Dr. Balamou's ideas on the importance of community and social networks to raise awareness of good health practices.

"Our priority as a continent should be prevention, prevention — and prevention," Dr. Boateng explained.

In Ghana, Dr. Boateng recommends, "as public health personnel, we need to engage an all-sector response" when a major health threat puts the public at risk.

Sierra Leone's Zainab Conteh, a Mandela Washington Fellow employed by her nation's ministry of health, notes specific areas where she hopes public health might advance: laboratory networks, health workforce capability and research capability.

Like her contemporaries in Ghana and Guinea, Conteh sees local-level people as an untapped resource for improving health care because they could bring a greater level of trust to health care.

"Community health workers could be trained on simple diagnosis [and] treatment of high-risk diseases like malaria, diarrhea, malnutrition." Basic education in communities could also allow early detection of dangerous health symptoms to allow quicker action for finding advanced medical care.

Dr. Farouk Garba, a Nigerian ophthalmologist, studied at the Johns Hopkins University Wilmer Eye Institute when he was in the United States. A number of health care policies he saw there might be successfully implemented in Africa, he told us.

Located in Baltimore, with a large population of urban poor, the Wilmer Eye Institute established small care centers at the neighborhood level. "This way health care is taken to the patients, to their door steps," Dr. Garba wrote.

"This will go a long way in saving lives," Dr. Garba wrote.

Guinea's Dr. Balamou says his participation in the Washington Mandela Fellowship program has better equipped him with decisionmaking skills to address complex health problems like Ebola and identify long-term, sustainable solutions.

Overall, these public health workers advise fellow young Africans to heed communications about health issues and recognize that everyone has a mutual interest and responsibility in protecting public health in their communities.

President Obama Hosts Town Hall with Young African Leaders

President Obama engaged with young African leaders at the Washington Fellowship Summit, announced the "Mandela Washington Fellowship," answered questions and unveiled educational resources created exclusively for the YALI Network. Watch the town hall here:

[Read the full transcript.](#)

[To Achieve Equality, First Lady Wants to 'Shake Things Up'](#)

Africa's future lies with women who run businesses, girls who attend university and "leaders like you," U.S. first lady Michelle Obama told young Africans attending the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Summit in Washington.

"Leadership is about creating new traditions that honor the dignity and humanity of every individual. Leadership is about empowering all of our people — men, women, boys and girls — to fulfill every last bit of their God-given potential," she said to the gathering of Africa's future leaders.

"When we commit to that kind of leadership across the globe, that is when we truly start making progress on girls' education. Because that's when families in small villages around the world will demand equal opportunities for their daughters. … That's when countries will willingly and generously invest in sending their girls to school," she stated.

The first lady noted that girls who are educated earn higher wages, are more likely to stand up to discrimination and abuse, and have healthier children who are more likely to attend school themselves.

She recalled that while neither of her parents had gone to university, "they had the courage and foresight to push me to get the best education I could."

"That's what should drive us all — the hope of raising the next generation to be stronger, smarter and bolder than our generation. … So many of you are already doing that."

Photo credit: AP Images

The first lady called on the men at the summit and others in the YALI Network to tell all the men they know "that a truly strong, powerful man isn't threatened by a strong, powerful woman. Instead, he is challenged by her, he is inspired by her, he is pleased to relate to her as an equal." She implored them "to keep modeling that behavior yourselves by promoting women in your companies, passing laws to empower women in your countries, and holding the same ambitious dreams for your daughters as you do for your sons."

She called on women at the summit and in YALI — some of whom may have disappointed their

families by postponing marriage in order to get an education — to help others to do the same.

Obama told the group that when they face obstacles and resistance in their work goals to remember the words of the man for whom their fellowship is now named — the late South African leader Nelson Mandela:

"It always seems impossible until it is done."